



Developing the Purrfect Communications Plan: *A Branding and Comms Strategy for Feline Rescue*



Caitlin Swanson

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Mission



To provide safe shelter, veterinary care,
and socialization for stray, abandoned,
or abused cats until good permanent homes
can be found for them

Situation analysis

- Overall strong support, especially from donors and adopters
- Cat-only expertise (core competency)
- Strong partnerships

- Disgruntled volunteers who are vocal
 - Particularly about paid staff/changes
- Homogenous supporter base
- Small budget

S W

O T

- Cats are cool
- Pet “parentship” trends
- People spending more on pets (e.g. pet insurance, specialty wellness clinics, etc.)

- Will cats stay cool, or is it just a trend?
- Crowded adoption/rescue space in the Twin Cities
- Risk of being overshadowed with larger, more visible rescues

Business Problem

1. Without a branding/ comms strategy, Feline Rescue's identity is in the eye of the beholder
2. Audience members, particularly volunteers, are vocally and publicly upset with changes implemented in the last few years

Business Objective

1. Create a communications strategy to better engage audiences
2. Find ways to encourage volunteers to accept, if not embrace, changes

Communications Goal

Develop a strong branding and messaging plan so that Feline Rescue can

- Solidify its **identity**
- Utilize **signature stories** in strategic ways
- Build **support** among its current audience and bring in new supporters

...all of which will help the organization effectively manage recent changes



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The research

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Key findings

Homogenous audience

77% of respondents have a four-year degree or more, 81% are women and 45% are over 55

Digital communication

Respondents identified email and social media as preferred communication methods

Opportunity to engage

Only 17% of respondents say they are involved, while 50% say they are somewhat involved and 33% say they are not involved

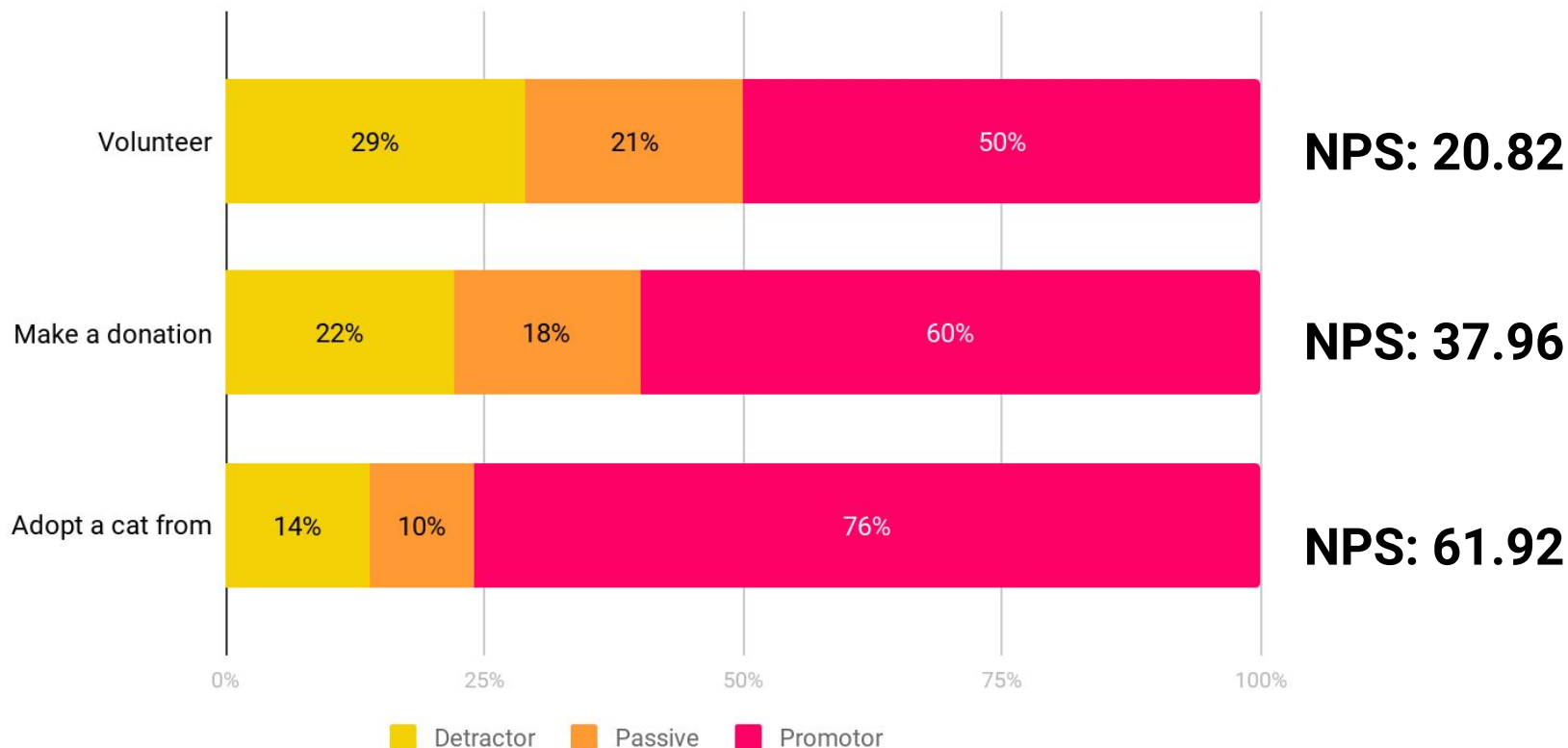
Generally positive, but...

While a majority of respondents think positively about Feline Rescue, a vocal minority has serious concerns

Each and every cat

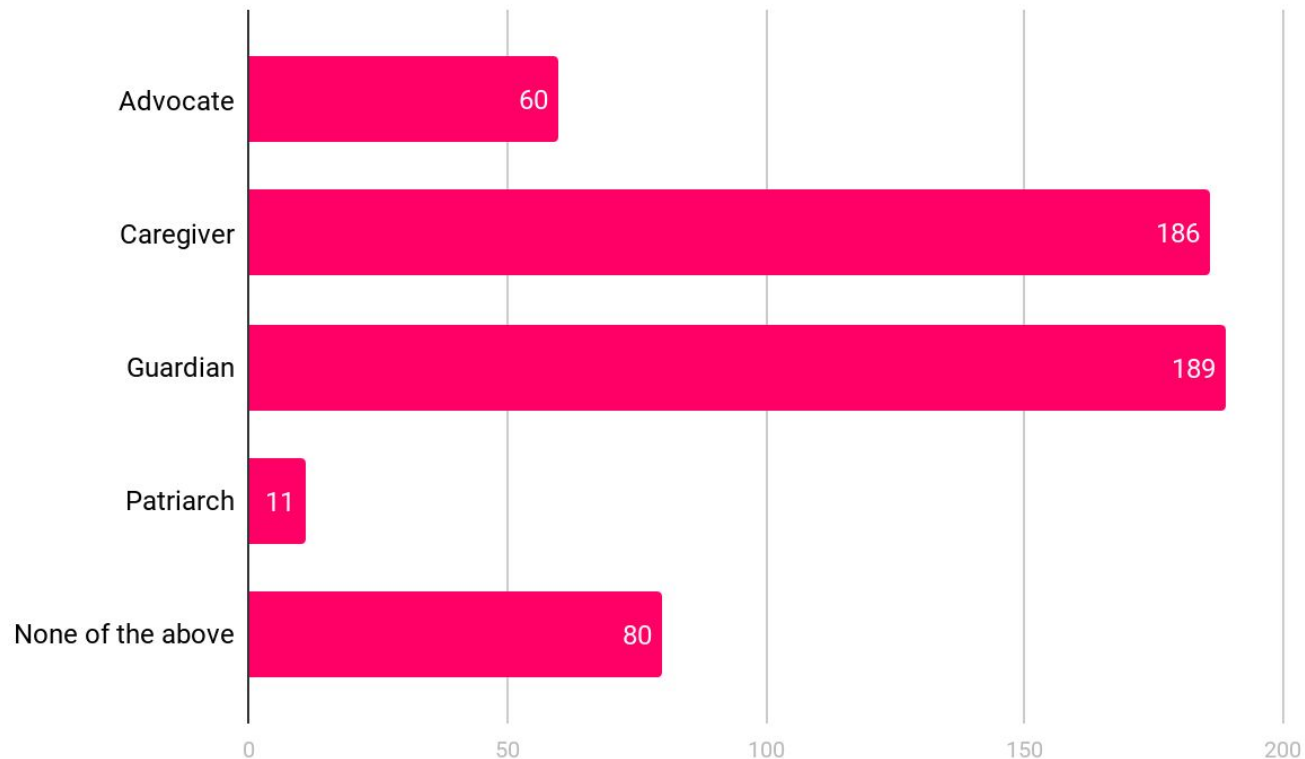
Respondents liked that Feline Rescue provides individualized care for each cat, even the hard cases

Most positive about adoption, less about volunteering



Q8: How likely are you to recommend Feline Rescue to a friend as a place to... // N: 538-Volunteer, 540-Donate, 541-Adopt

Split between Caregiver and Guardian



Q3: Which of the following best describes the character of Feline Rescue? // N: 526

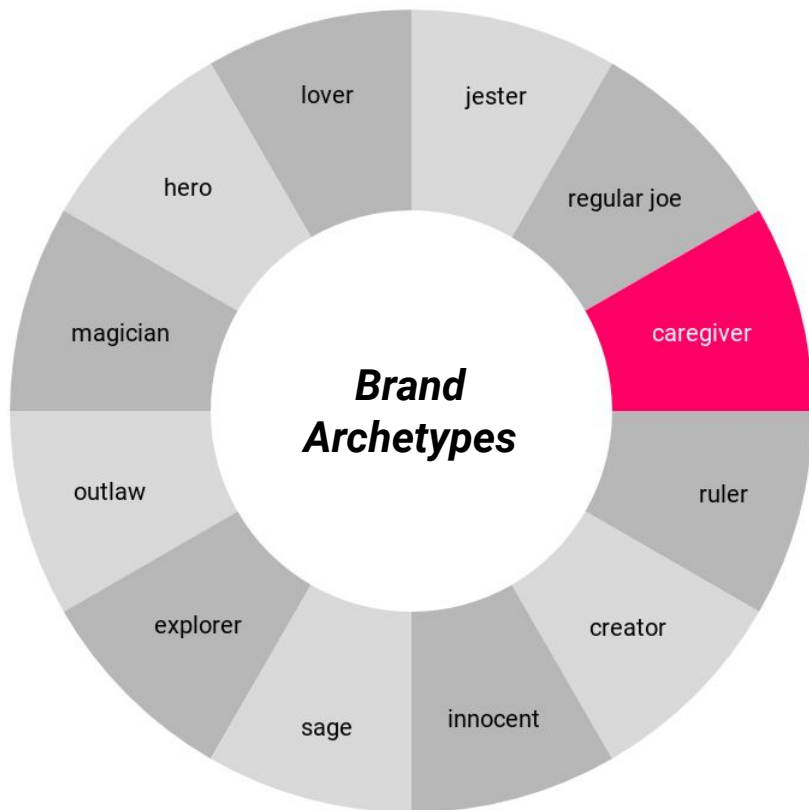


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Branding approach

From Caregiver...



Desire care, protect and nurture

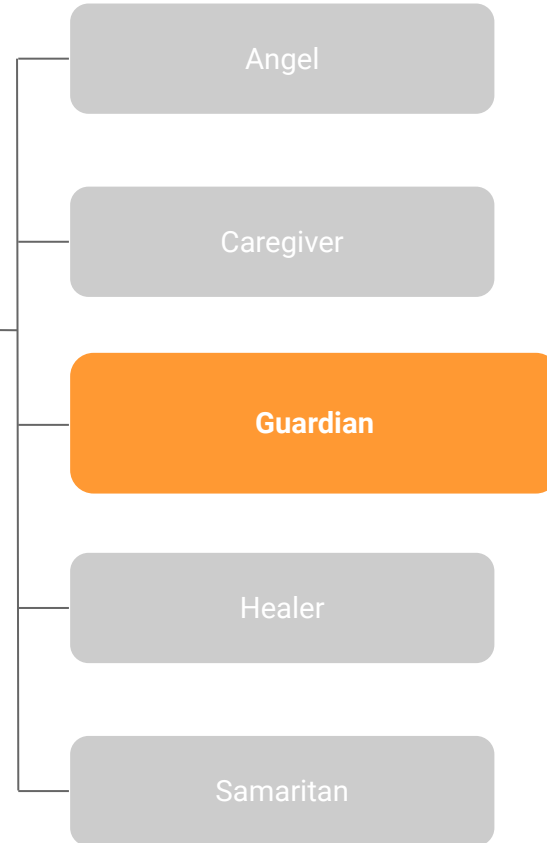
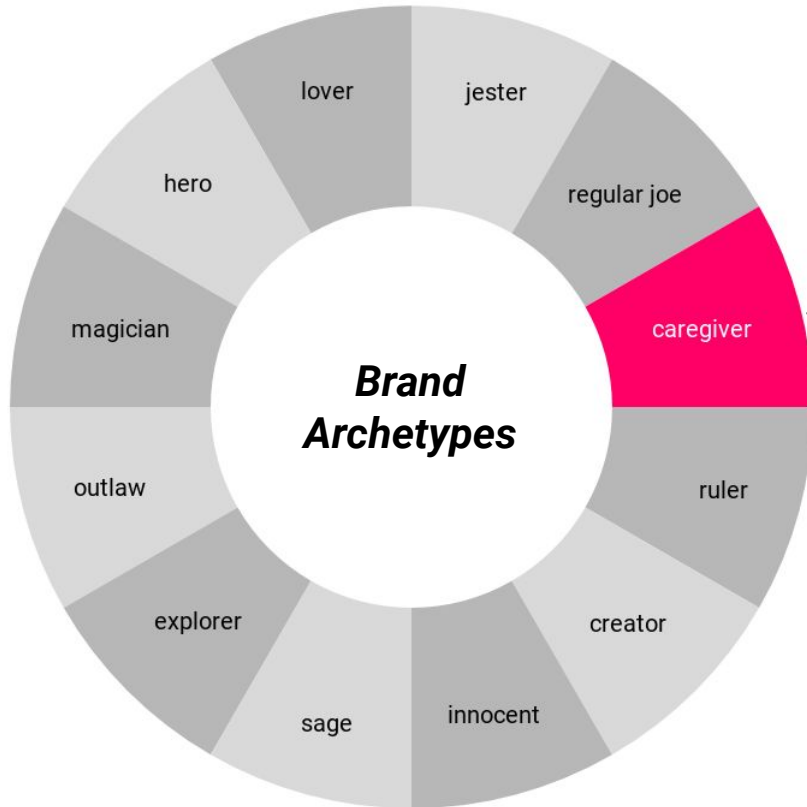
Goal help others

Strategy do things for others

Fear neglect, instability, ingratitude

Weakness martyrdom, being exploited

...to Guardian



guardian

caring

dedicated

responsible

Culture

Cats are cool now.
Haven't you been on
Instagram lately?

Brand

We do so much more than
adoptions. We provide
individualized care to each
and every cat so they can live
their best nine lives

Market

Lots of rescues, lots of
partnerships, lots of
love... but little room to
stick out

Target

Everyone is a cat person,
even if they don't know it
yet

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Connecting you with (hu)man's best friend

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Communications plan

Strategic audience nuances



Donor

- Sees Feline Rescue as a **Guardian** (35%)
- Generally **favorable** toward Feline Rescue
- Highest NPS for **donations**
- Only **20%** believe they are very involved or involved
- **Oldest** skewing audience



Adopter

- Evenly split between **Caregiver** and **Guardian** (38% each)
- Audience most **favorable** toward Feline Rescue
- Highest NPS for **volunteering** and **adoptions**
- Only **13%** believe they are very involved or involved
- **Youngest** skewing audience



Volunteer

- Sees Feline Rescue as a **Caregiver** (36%), though 31% selected "**none of the above**"
- Audience **least favorable** toward Feline Rescue
- **Negative NPS** for volunteering and donations
- **61%** believe they are very involved or involved

Donor messaging

Communication Objective

- Drive loyalty
- Forge emotional bond

Barrier

There are so many rescues in the area. How do I know Feline Rescue is doing the best work?

Message

You help each and every cat live their best nine lives.



Adopter messaging

Communication Objective

- Create awareness
- Forge emotional bond

Barrier

I'm not sure if I'm a cat person, so why would I go to a cat-only rescue?

Message

You might be the perfect human.



Volunteer messaging

Communication Objective

- Change perceptions
- Drive loyalty

Barrier

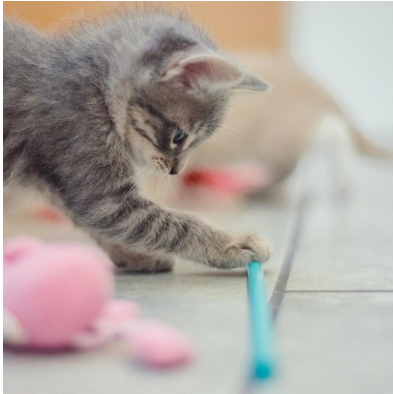
With all the infighting, is it even worth it to try and make a difference here?

Message

You are the vital link between each cat and their furever home.







Channels + Tactics

O

Utilize owned channels to bring FR's personality to life, provide information and draw in current and new supporters

- Email marketing
- Content strategy + blog
- In-house signage/marketing



S

Capitalize on the accessibility of shared media to share stories, reach new supporters and build community

- Facebook fundraisers
- Distribute Owned and Earned stories
- Buffer against negative backlash

E

Tap into earned media by showcasing Feline Rescue's unique cat-only, no-kill policies, strong partnerships and results

- Leverage seasonal moments (e.g. kitten season)
- Unique events and volunteering opportunities
- Solidify status as cat experts

P

Leverage low-cost paid media opportunities to expand traditional reach

- Google Ad Grants
- Social media advertising

From awareness to adoption...



Google

Amy and Adam Adopter have decided they want to adopt an animal so they google “animal rescues”

They are served a Feline Rescue ad via Google Ad Grants



Visit website

After clicking on the ad, the Adopters visit the Feline Rescue website, browse adoptable cats and read a blog post on a recent adoption story



Seek information

A few days later, the Adopters return to the website and decide to visit. They look up Feline Rescue's location and hours



First visit

The Adopters visit Feline Rescue, meet with different cats and witness adoptions

Though they're not committed yet, their excitement is growing and they take home a brochure about the adoption process

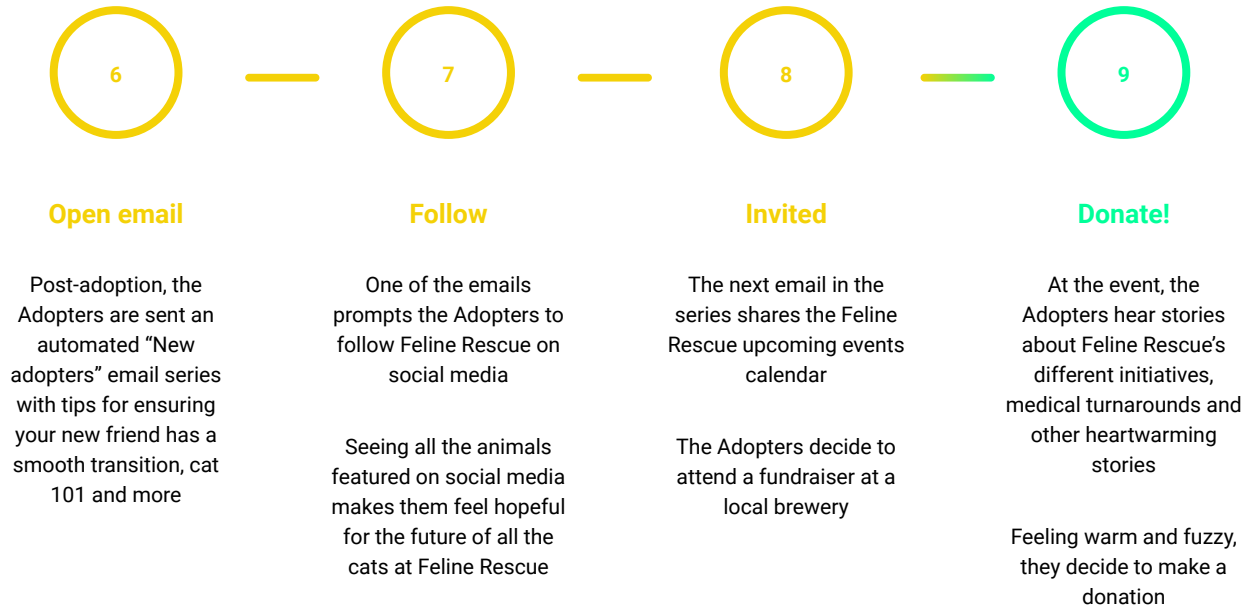


Adoption!

They decide to adopt! They return a week later knowing they're ready to find their purrfect companion

They fall in love with a 3 year old tabby who's had a rough past but is full of love and cuddles

...and adoption to donation



A black and white cat is lying down, its body stretched out. The image is covered with a red gradient that is darker on the right side. The cat's head is on the left, and its tail is on the right. The text 'Implementation + evaluation' is centered over the cat's body.

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Implementation + evaluation

How do we do it?

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Volunteering opportunities	Fostering/kitten season	Adoptions	Giving opportunities
Always on: email marketing, blog, social media, Google grants, PR			
	Spring fundraising		End of year giving
Print newsletter		Print newsletter	
Annual Report		Annual Gala	

Budget

- Email management system
- CRM to track donors, adopters and volunteers
- Print materials (annual report, fundraising, newsletter, event materials)
- Staff

Staffing

- External relations associate
- Skills-based volunteers
- Communications advisory committee

How will we know it worked?



Donor

Objectives: Loyalty, emotional bond

- Track own efforts
- Recurring gifts
- Increase in gifts
- Increase in new and returning donors



Adopter

Objectives: Awareness, emotional bond

- Flash surveys
 - Demos
 - How did you hear about us?
- Engagement, event attendance and donation rates



Volunteer

Objectives: Change perception, loyalty

- NPS surveys
- Volunteer return rates
- Interviews
 - Perceptions
 - Feelings



Summary

Use communications to guide the transition from Caregiver to Guardian

Incorporate the individualized care every cat receives into communications

Invest in owned media, such as email marketing and social media

Leverage strategic storytelling to bring the brand to life and communicate change

Continue surveying audiences to track progress